THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (c) Government have not received any report as described in the Newspaper article referred to in the question.

(d) Government is taking several steps to streamline procedures for implementation of projects and to avoid cost escalation.

These include close monitoring by the Planning Commission and by the Ministries, with special emphasis on timely procurement action by project authorities, simplification of procedure in respect of foreign exchange, tender evaluation, provision of advance additional central assistance, etc.

Realization of objectives of National Housing Board

4023. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been achieved so far to realise the social objectives of housing like slum clearance|upgradation and low cost housing for the poor after the National Housing Bank which was launched w.e.f. October 1, 1991; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) National Housing Bank (NHB) formulated a scheme known as National Housing Bank (Voluntary Deposit) Scheme 1991. The scheme was launched on October 1, 1991 and was closed on January 31, 1992. As stipulated in the said scheme 40 per cent of the amount deposited was to be created to a Special Fund to be utilised for financing slum clearance and low cost housing. An amount of Rs. 61.51 crores has been credited to the Special Fund, NHB has framed guidelines for utilisation of the said fund. The details guidelines have been adopted by their Board of Directors recently and they have also been approved by the Government. The disbursement under the scheme has not yet started.

Corruption in Central Excise and Gold Act Tribunal

4024. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the corruption prevailing in Central Excise, Customs and Gold Act Tribunal in Delhi;

(b) whether Government are aware that the son of one Member of the tribunal and wife of another Member are associated with lawyers dealing with petitions involving Rs. 110 crores;

(c) whether Government propose to hold a C.B.I. enquiry into the affairs of the Central Excise and Gold Act Tribunal, Delhi, if so, when; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) Some allegations have been made in an editorial of the Excise Law Times.

(c) and (d) The Supreme Court of India has taken suo moto notice of the editorial, and the matter is subjudice.